

## **Summary of the Accrediting Authority Committee Meeting January 13, 1998**

The Accrediting Authority Committee of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met on Tuesday, January 13, 1998, at 10:30 a.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST) as part of the Third NELAC Interim Meeting in Arlington, VA. The meeting was led by its chair, Mr. John Anderson of the Illinois EPA Division of Laboratories. A list of action items is given in Attachment A. A list of participants is given in Attachment B.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Mr. Anderson convened the meeting, welcomed the participants to this meeting, and introduced the committee members. He noted that today's agenda should include changes to Chapter 6, the sunset clause regarding NELAP application, and a report from the ISO subcommittee.

### **REVIEW OF CHAPTER 6**

Mr. Anderson reviewed the current status of Chapter 6 and provided a brief overview of the contents of that chapter. A discussion followed regarding the accreditation process for accrediting authorities, the timeline for the process and the criteria for the assessment of the applicant accrediting authority.

Mr. Anderson distributed copies of the most recent proposed changes from the Ad Hoc Transition Committee dated January 8, 1998. The changes deal primarily with the replacement of "reciprocity" with "recognition" throughout the NELAP standard. At the recommendation of the Board of Directors, however, the issue has been tabled until further discussion by the board. Dr. Ken Jackson provided an overview of the rationale for the change of language and the difference between the two terms as it applies to NELAP. It was pointed out that the term "recognition" specifically implies reciprocal recognition between NELAP and the accrediting authorities, and between the various accrediting authorities.

The committee agreed that the change in terminology from "reciprocity" to "recognition" be accepted pending future approval by the Board of Directors. It was noted that a specific definition of "recognition" needs to be included in the NELAP glossary which indicates reciprocal recognition.

### **DISCUSSION OF INTERIM RECOGNITION SUNSET CLAUSE**

Mr. Anderson reviewed the current process for interim recognition of accrediting authorities and the time constraints associated with that process. The proposed change to Section 6.5 of the standard makes the recommendation that the time be limited to June 30, 2000, for accrediting authorities to complete changes to their program to meet all NELAP requirements. This gives the accrediting authorities the time to make changes to deficiencies requiring legislative or rulemaking changes. Accrediting authorities applying after that date must be completely NELAP compliant. It was pointed out by Mr. Anderson that NELAP recognition can be granted to accrediting

authorities provided their program meets all NELAP requirements with the exception of those areas requiring legislative or rulemaking changes. There was considerable discussion of this issue as it effects accrediting authorities and environmental laboratories having to temporarily deal with variable requirements. Mr. Anderson pointed out that these issues have been decided upon already, and the current issue is simply the acceptance of the sunset clause.

The sunset clause is to precede Section 6.5, and reads “For all accrediting authorities applying for initial NELAP recognition prior to July 1, 2000, and . . .”. The committee agreed that the sunset clause proposal be accepted.

## **ADDITIONAL PROPOSED CHANGES TO CHAPTER 6**

Mr. Anderson then introduced the changes to Chapter 6 proposed by the committee, most of which are editorial. He provided a detailed review of the seven pages of proposed changes. Additional changes discussed include:

- 6.9.1 (e)(2)(A) Change “registration” to “certification”.
- 6.9.1 (e)(2)(A) This section may need revision to include other options for certification of one team member as a lead assessor.

There was no further discussion of the proposed changes. The substantive, non-editorial changes will be voted on at NELAC IV in July 1998.

## **PROGRESS REPORT FROM THE ISO SUBCOMMITTEE**

The subcommittee chair, Bob Wyeth, was absent, and the report was presented by Dr. Jeff Flowers. The subcommittee assignment was to determine if the process for recognition of accrediting authorities needed to be consistent with ISO standards, and if so, to recommend appropriate changes to Chapter 6. The subcommittee determined that the ISO Guide 58 standards were relevant to this NELAC standard. Dr. Flowers then provided a detailed review of changes proposed by the subcommittee to Chapter 6 in order to make it ISO Guide 58 recognizable. The subcommittee requested input from any interested parties who are ISO Guide 58 proficient.

Mr. Anderson pointed out that it is the intent of NELAP to be more specific in its requirements than ISO tends to be and that NELAP should not necessarily be attempting to limit itself to ISO. The committee agreed to follow up on the subcommittee recommendations in a future teleconference.

## **ADDITIONAL ISSUES**

There were no additional issues raised by the committee. Issues brought up by attendees included:

- Request for specific criteria for a laboratory’s right to refusal of an assessment team; the participant agreed to submit materials to the committee for review

- Discussion of problems with state legislative action with the constantly-changing NELAC Standard
- Discussion of the training mechanism for NELAC laboratory assessors
- Need for compliance with ISO Guide 61

## **CONCLUSION OF MEETING**

After finishing discussion of the agenda items, Mr. Anderson adjourned the meeting.

**ACTION ITEMS**  
**Accrediting Authority Committee**  
**January 13, 1998**

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Action Item</b>	<b>Date To Be Completed</b>
1.	Discuss proposed changes relevant to ISO Guide 58	
2.	Change reciprocity to recognition pending board approval	
3.	Prepare overheads for plenary session	1/14/98

**PARTICIPANTS**  
**Accrediting Authority Committee**  
**January 13, 1998**

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